Stormwater Pollution Prevention

Yard Service

Landscaping

- Where feasible, retain and/or plant native vegetation since it usually requires less maintenance than new vegetation. When planting or replanting consider using flowers, trees, shrubs, and groundcovers that have low water use. Consider alternative landscaping techniques such as naturescaping and xeriscaping.

- Minimize the use of pesticides and fertilizers; read the labels and follow directions to avoid improper use; do not apply chemicals if it is windy or about to rain. Try using organic or non-toxic fertilizer alternatives. Avoid applying chemical fertilizers near curbs, driveways, gutters, ditches, streams or waterbodies. Properly clean up and dispose of spills of landscaping chemicals, fertilizers, or soils. If possible, return the spilled material to the container for future use. Store fertilizers and chemicals in closed, waterproof, labeled containers, in a covered area, or off-ground and under protective tarps.

- Follow all federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the use, storage, and disposal of fertilizers. Follow manufacturers' recommendations and label directions. Employ techniques to minimize off-target application (e.g. spray drift) of fertilizer, including consideration of alternative application techniques. Calibrate fertilizer distributors to avoid excessive application. Periodically test soils for determining proper fertilizer use. Fertilizers should be worked into the soil rather than dumped or broadcast onto the surface. Sweep pavement and sidewalk if fertilizer is spilled on these surfaces before applying irrigation water. Use slow release fertilizers whenever possible to minimize leaching.

- Group plants with similar water requirements in order to reduce excess irrigation runoff and promote surface filtration. Choose plants with low irrigation requirements. Design the irrigation system to each landscape area's specific water requirements. Adjust irrigation systems to reflect seasonal water needs. Design timing and application methods of irrigation water to minimize the runoff of excess irrigation water into the storm water drainage system. Implement landscape plans consistent with County or City water conservation resolutions, which may include water sensors, programmable irrigation times (for short cycles), rain-triggered shutoff devices to prevent irrigation after precipitation and flow reducers or shutoff valves triggered by a pressure drop to control water loss in the event of broken sprinkler heads or lines. Use drip irrigation, soaker hoses, or micro-spray systems where appropriate and feasible.

- Dispose of grass clippings, leaves, sticks, or other collected vegetation as garbage at a permitted landfill or by composting as soon as possible. Do not dispose of gardening wastes in streets, waterways, or storm drainage systems. Place temporarily stockpiled material away from watercourses and storm drain inlets, and berm and/or cover. After landscaping activities, do not sweep or blow clippings and waste into the street or gutter. Avoid hosing down the pavement.

- Irrigate slowly or pulse irrigate so the infiltration rate of the soil is not exceeded. Inspect irrigation system regularly for leaks and to ensure that excessive runoff is not occurring. If re-claimed water is used for irrigation, ensure that there is no runoff from the landscaped area(s). Use automatic timers to minimize runoff. Use popup sprinkler heads in areas with a lot of activity or where pipes may be broken. Consider the use of mechanisms that reduce water flow to broken sprinkler heads.

- Store stockpiles under plastic tarps to protect them from wind and rain. Cover non-vegetated surfaces to prevent erosion. Use mulches in planter areas without ground cover to minimize sediment in runoff. Leave a vegetative barrier along the property boundary and interior watercourses, to act as a pollutant filter, where appropriate and feasible. Develop healthy soil; choose a grass type that thrives in the climate where it will be planted; mow high, often, and with sharp blades; water deeply but not too often.

Tree Trimming

Place temporarily stockpiled material away from watercourses and storm drain inlets, and cover.

Dispose of collected vegetation as garbage at a permitted landfill or by composting. Do not dispose of tree trimming wastes in streets, waterways, or storm drainage systems.

Caltrans

Stormwater Pollution Prevention

Weed Abatement, Mowing, Disking

- Use mechanical methods of vegetation removal such as hand weeding rather than applying herbicides. When mowing or hand weeding, minimize loosening the soil, which could lead to erosion.

- When possible, use a lawn mower that has a mulcher so that the grass clippings remain on the lawn. Compost materials in a designated area, take clippings to a landfill for composting, or recycle lawn clippings and greenery waste through local programs when available.

- For activities involving the removal of vegetation, the limits of disturbance should be defined to minimize adverse effects on vegetation outside the working area. The protection of desirable vegetation provides erosion and sediment control. The following steps should be taken to preserve existing vegetation:

  - Vegetation outside the limits of disturbance should be replaced if damaged
  - Minimize the number of access and egress points and locate them to reduce damage to existing vegetation
  - Maintenance materials and equipment storage and parking areas should be located where they will not cause root compaction
  - Keep equipment away from trees to prevent trunk and root damage
  - Avoid placing soil around trunks of trees.

- Disking involves turning over the soil in which a plow having one or more heavy, round, concave, sharpened, freely rotating steel disks angled to cut and turn a furrow is drawn across a site. When possible, maintain furrows away from points of ingress/egress.

- Avoid heavy equipment operations in very wet or saturated soil conditions. Do not damage water control devices (i.e. culverts, wing ditches). Maintain an undisked buffer along the perimeter to serve as a vegetation filter for sediments.

- Avoid over spraying onto sidewalks, lined drainage channels, roadways or existing vegetation. Minimize the number of access and egress points and locate them to reduce damage to existing vegetation.

- During egress from the property inspect the disks to assure that they are free of accumulated sediment and vegetation.